

how can anything be worth anything when it lasts forever?

by altrove

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Summary: These are the tales of a specialized squadron of clone commandos officially known as Erebus Squadron, but they like to call themselves the Killjoys because it sounds cool and really they're just a Big Bunch o' Nerds.

## 1. participation medals of the heart

### \*\*AUTHORS NOTES\*\*

I was having too many feelings about my clone ocs, so I wrote this to get them out and somehow wound up giving myself more feelings. That plan didn't work out very well for me, but it did get the creative juices flowing, or whatever the kids are saying nowadays. This fic does centre around my original characters, so you can check out this post I made if you want a bit of background info going in, although I don't think it's really necessary for you to understand the story. This was also based off a prompt from this list. So, like, enjoy or whatever I guess.  $\hat{A}^-\backslash\_(\tilde{a}f,,)\_/\hat{A}^-$

\* \* \*

><p>"Do you wanna talk about it?" Kach settles in beside Binder where he's sitting on a catwalk overlooking the hangar bay, troopers from the 212th running around below them and preparing the cruiser for takeoff. Their squad had joined with the 212th for this mission, and while Kach would have liked to stay with his squad, they went where they were needed. This wouldn't be a problem, except that Kach wasn't with Binder when whatever happened, happened, and now he doesn't know how to help his brother.<p>

The team medic just shrugs in response.

"Do you want me to leave?" Kach asks next, and Binder hesitates a moment before shaking his head. "Well, that's good, because I wouldn't have left even if you asked." Kach continues, and he sees

his brother's mouth twitch slightly at the words. It's not a complete smile, not nearly, but it's something other than the glazed look Binder's had for the past twelve hours so Kach counts it as a victory.

"You know it wasn't your fault, right?" Binder's head turns away from him at the words so Kach can no longer see his face, and what he says next is so quiet Kach almost misses it.

"It was, though." Binder's voice is rough from disuse, even as quiet as it is. "I should've been faster, or trained harder, or at least seen the blasted droid, orâ€" "

Kach grabs his brother's shoulder, stopping him mid sentence. "Binder, whoa, hey. Look at me. Binder, come on." When he finally has his attention, Kach can see the tears forming in Binder's eyes. "Don't do this to yourself, Binder, please."

"I deserve it though," Binder says, and the tears are getting worse and are threatening to spill over now as the medic becomes more distressed with every word. "It's my fault."

"What's your fault?" Maverick drops down on Binder's other side, setting down his helmet beside the other two on the ground. Kach sends a silent thank you up to whatever deity is watching over them, because Kach is completely at a loss with how to help his friend and Mav couldn't have shown up at a better time. When Binder only stares blankly at the pilot, Maverick asks the question again. And then Binder curls in on himself, leg drawn up to his chest and face pressed into his knee, and he really does start crying. It's sudden, and Maverick looks about as lost as Kach feels when the medic starts shaking due to the silent sobs wracking his frame.

Kach decides he wants to take back the thank you, because he knew Maverick did not deal with crying well. The man had a very strict sergeant when he first started serving, and because his sergeant did not allow things like crying, Maverick had never had to deal with it.

However, it seemed that none of that mattered here, because as soon as Maverick was over his shock he wrapped his arm around Binder and drew him into his side. Kach didn't know what to doâ€"he dealt with crying about as well as Mav, although for entirely different reasonsâ€"but it seemed like the physical contact was helping Binder to calm down, so Kach reached out and grabbed the hand that was currently locked in a death grip around Binder's shin.

They sat like that for a while, the three of them oblivious to the chaos below them of a starship that had just taken off, suspended in their own world. The metal he was sitting on was cold, a side effect of being in space, but Binder was warm beside him and for now that was enough.

When Binder had finally started to breath normally again, Maverick was the first to speak up. He asked the question that Kach himself had been wondering, and the quiet words asking "Who was it?" were such a deviation from Maverick's usual boisterous tone that Kach snapped his head up to look at the pilot over Binder's still hunched back. What he saw surprised him even further, because the look in Maverick's eyes was so sad, and Kach suddenly remembered that

Maverick was older than most of the clones on their squad. Hell, he was older than most clones period, and that also meant that he had probably lost more brothers than most of them, too. Kach barely has time to think about how he's probably lucky, he hasn't lost all that many people close to him, when Binder finally speaks up.

"Crux," is all he says at first, and at a prompting look from Maverick he continues, stammering. "He, uh, he was one of my batchers." Maverick pulls Binder closer at that same time Kach squeezes his hand, and neither of them say sorry because they've both lost enough friends to know the words don't really mean anything. Neither of them are really expecting Binder to continue, but he does anyways.

"It was a droid, and his back was turned. I'm a medic, I should have been able to save him." Binder shakes his head and gives a brief, humourless laugh. "It just isn't fair." His voice cracks, and the pain he hears is almost more than Kach can handle.

"No, it really isn't." Is all Maverick responds. They're all silent for a moment more before Binder speaks again.

"He was all I had left. Everyone from my batch is gone now. I'm alone." The medic starts to curl in on himself again after saying that, and Kach decides he's had enough.

"You're not alone, though," Kach says, and there's vehemence in his voice. When Binder looks confused, he continues, his voice softened. "You have us." And he says it like it's the most obvious thing in the world.

"Yeah, I guess I do." And Binder finally smiles. It's small and still kind of watery, but it's a smile nonetheless.

"Besides, as long as you remember your brothers, they're never really gone." Kach had overheard someone say something like that once, in some backwater smuggler's haven, and he liked the way it sounded.

Maverick snorts and stands up. "That was the cheesiest damn thing I've ever heard." His voice is back at it's normal volume and tone, and Kach wonders if it was the right thing to say. Binder is still smiling, though, so it must have been at least somewhat okay. Kach is pulled out of his thoughts when Mav suggests that they go somewhere else.

"Like where?" Binder asks.

"I'm pretty sure I heard Cannon say he could do more push-ups than Push," Maverick says, and the usual gleam is back in his eyes.

"Doesn't the idiot know where Push got his name?" Kach says, incredulous.

"If he didn't then he's about to find out, now let's go." Kach knows when Mav is getting impatient, so he and Binder both drag themselves up beside him.

"Now this I've gotta see," Binder says. His eyes are still red and

his voice is kind of hoarse, but Kach figures that he'll be fine, eventually, especially after seeing Cannon have his ass handed to him. That would brighten anyone's day.

They walk through the ship's hallways to the gym, Maverick talking nonstop about whatever the topic of the hour happens to be, and Kach never letting go of Binder's hand. Yeah, he thinks to himself, We'll be just fine.

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><p><strong><span>AUTHORS NOTES<span>\*\*

Okay so that was A Thing that happened. I fully intend to write more about these kids and the rest of the Killjoys squad, and my goal in life is to make people feel things about characters for which they would otherwise feel nothing, so if I managed to do that maybe hmu in the comments section or smth. I'm also going to do a bit of shameless self-promotion for my blog, so you can find me on tumblr at ahsokaas, although that does tend to change pretty frequently. Thanks for reading! (okay that sounded rlly cheesy but its also way to late to care) Title was lifted from a Softer World comic.

Cross posted from AO3, and all my hyperlinks broke when I did it. I've got a test tomorrow and I'm way to tired to fix it right now so I'm just gonna go to bed. You can find me on AO3 under the same name if you really want to click the links.

## 2. we're just getting started

"Of course it had to kriffing snow," Cannon grumbled, and Kane shot him a look that said Not in front of the commanding officers. Cannon dutifully ignored him, and went right back to complaining. "The weather report in the mission briefing didn't say anything about snow. I hate snow."

"Aw, come on, Cannon," Axel jumped into the conversation. "This isn't so bad. We could be on Hoth." Kane looked like he wanted to let out a large sigh at the teasing notes in their captain's voice, but he didn't, because professionalism.

"Please don't even mention Hoth." And Cannon looked actually pained at the notion of being on the ice planet as his mild shivering increased.

It had started snowing about an hour prior as they were walking through a forest to rendezvous with the other two teams their squadron had split into for a successful mission on one of the mid-rim planets. It took them by surprise, because as much as Cannon's complaints were annoying, he did have a point: the mission briefing had said nothing about snow. Of course, that meant that they didn't have any snow gear. Sure, the bodysuits they wore under their armour provided some insulation, but not nearly as much as snow gear would have, and the Kaminoans taught them that they should never be caught without the proper gear in the snow, because that could prove deadly, especially on the harsher planets like Hoth.

Flint himself had never actually seen snow before. The need for more troopers and his rushed training meant that he hadn't had the

hands-on snow planet training the rest of his older brothers had gotten. \_Honestly\_ he thought to himself \_this isn't as bad as the Kaminoans made it seem\_. The snow here was soft and fluffy, not the pelting ice his training had warned him of, and the ground wasn't slippery in the slightest, especially on the main paths they were walking. He also wasn't experiencing the biting chill of strong winds, because there weren't any to speak of.

"What do you think, Flint?" Flint was startled out of his thoughts and looked up to see his three brothers looking at him expectantly.

"What do I think of what?" Flint asked, and immediately regretted it. His brothers laughed, and it was friendly laughter, but he endured enough teasing as it was \_thank you very much\_.

Axel sighed and repeated the question. "Cannon was wondering what you thought about the snow. He hates it, I don't mind, and we finally got Kane to admit he actually has \_opinions\_, for once, so he doesn't like it."

"We're split and we need a tiebreaker," Cannon interrupted, getting impatient with the captain. "So, what do you think about the snow."

"I like it," Flint said, and Cannon looked mildly offended. "It's nice, and kinda warm." This time Cannon looked as if Flint had personally insulted him.

"Have you lost your mind?" Cannon nearly shouted. "Snow is not \_warm\_! It's cold and terrible."

Axel shot a pointed look at Cannon and said "I told you were overreacting to this. Not everyone thinks snow is the worst thing to ever happen."

"Then everyone is \_wrong\_," Cannon whined, and continued to mutter under his breath about how he was serving with a bunch of crazies as he trudged ahead of the rest of his teammates.

They kept walking like that for some distance more, Kane on Flint's right side and Axel on his left, before Kane spoke up again.

"What exactly did you mean when you said the snow was warm?" The group's sniper looked more than a little confused, and although Axel was staring at their surroundings on the lookout for danger, Flint could tell he was listening intently. Flint paused for a moment to gather his thoughts so he wouldn't sound like a complete idiot, and then tried his best to explain.

"Well, in the training classes on Kamino, they always said snow could kill you because it's cold and harsh and they said it hurts, but this isn't anything like that. This snow is soft, and it feels like... Well, I'm not entirely sure, but something nice." He held up one of his hands to catch the falling flakes, and they melted as soon as they hit his palm. Flint was so enamoured by the white specks that he missed the look that Axel and Kane shared over his head.

"Are you saying," Axel said, "that you've never seen snow before?"

Flint looked surprised as he considered the question. When he spoke it was slow and sounded like he was just stumbling upon something he should have realized some time ago. "Yeah," he said. "Yeah, I guess I am."

Cannon, who had been maintaining a steady distance in front of them, stopped and whirled around with a loud "What?!" The statement could have sounded dangerous under different circumstances, but Cannon had a manic grin on his face that offset the dangerous tone of his words. Although, some of his brothers may argue that when that particular expression showed up on Cannon's face it actually tended to make things more dangerous for any people involved.

"Well, yeah," Flint said, "They needed more troops on the field, so I kind of... Skipped that part of training?" Kane look appalledâ€"an expression that frequented his faceâ€"at the notion of troopers with incomplete training. In contrast, Cannon's grin got impossibly wider.

"There's hope for you yet, kid," he says, and moves to lean his arm on Flint's shoulder. Flint shakes him off as Cannon continues. "You've never seen real snow. So, I'll talk to the general, convince her to make our next mission somewhere with actual snowstorms, and you can join the ranks of the sane people like Kane and me."

Axel shook his head, and Flint could tell he was hiding a smile under his helmet. "Alright troopers," he said, "let's keep moving. We've got to get to the rendezvous before sundown."

Cannon straightens up and responds with an over-the-top "SIR, YES SIR!" and an exaggerated salute, and Flint swears he actually hears Kane let out a small sigh (which Kane denies later, but it happened, okay?). They start making their way further down the forest path they'd been following, and make it to the rendezvous to find Binder having a fit because the general seems to attract trouble and got herself hurt again, although no one from that team actually has anything worse than a few scrapes and bruises after slipping on some ice and straight into a group of battle droids.

Cannon stays true to his words, and over dinner 'respectfully requests' that their next mission be on an ice planet. Craft, who hates snow even more than Cannon, nearly flays the latter alive for the suggestion. The general just laughs and says I'll talk to the council and see what I can do with a knowing smirk that means she will be doing No Such Thing. Flint thinks he wouldn't mind so much even if their next mission was on Hoth, because he reasons that it's gotta be better than sweating your ass off on some of the desert planets they're been to.

Flint has a dream that night, different from the usual nightmares, where he's living another life. He's not in the army and he's living in a small village town, and he can see through the window that it's snowing heavily outside. It provides a nice contrast for the warmth inside the house, soft yellow light spilling out the window. Flint wakes up the next morning with an overwhelming sense of contentment and love, although he can't for the life of him remember what he dreamed.

End  
file.